

From Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition

§48. MINUTES AND REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Minutes

48:1 *The official record of the proceedings of a deliberative assembly is usually called the minutes, or sometimes—particularly in legislative bodies—the journal. The minutes should be kept in a substantial book or binder.*

48:2 Content of the Minutes. In an ordinary society, *the minutes should contain mainly a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said by the members.* The minutes must never reflect the secretary's opinion, favorable or otherwise, on anything said or done.

48:3 To modify the rules governing what is regularly to be included in the minutes requires adoption of a special rule of order, although a majority vote may direct the inclusion of specific additional information in the minutes of a particular meeting.

48:4 The first paragraph of the minutes *should contain the following information* (which need not, however, be divided into numbered or separated items directly corresponding to those below): 1) *the kind of meeting: regular, special, adjourned regular, or adjourned special*; 2) *the name of the society or assembly*; 3) *the date and time of the meeting, and the place, if it is not always the same*; 4) *the fact that the regular chairman and secretary were present or, in their absence, the names of the persons who substituted for them*; and 5) *whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved—as read, or as corrected—and the date of that meeting if it was other than a regular business meeting.* Any correction approved by the assembly is made in the text of the minutes being approved; the minutes of the meeting making the correction merely state that the minutes were approved “as corrected,” without specifying what the correction was (see first paragraph of form, 48:8). *The body of the minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each subject matter, and should show:* 6) *all main motions (10) or motions to bring a main question again before the assembly (6:25–27; 34–37) that were made or taken up—except, normally, any that were withdrawn³—stating:* a) *the wording in which each motion was adopted or otherwise disposed of (with the facts as to whether the motion may have been debated or amended before disposition being mentioned only parenthetically); and b) the disposition of the motion, including—if it was temporarily disposed of (9:7–11, 38:8)—any primary and secondary amendments and all adhering secondary motions that were then pending*; 7) *secondary motions that were not lost or withdrawn, in cases where it is necessary to record them for completeness or clarity—for example, motions to Recess or to Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn (among the privileged motions), or motions to Suspend the Rules or grant a Request to Be Excused from a Duty (among the incidental motions), generally only alluding to the adoption of such motions, however, as “... the matter having been advanced in the agenda on motion of...” or “... a ballot vote having been ordered, the tellers...”*; 8) *the complete substance of oral committee reports that are permitted to be given in small assemblies in particular cases as provided in 51:60–62*; 9) *all notices of motions (10:44–51)*; 10) *all points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost, together with the reasons given by the chair for his or her ruling*; and 11) *the declaration by the chair in “naming” an offending member as a part of disciplinary procedures, as well as any disorderly words that led to such naming and that the*

chair directed the secretary to take down (see 61:12–14). The last paragraph should state: 12) the hour of adjournment.

48:5 *Additional rules and practices relating to the content of the minutes are the following: 1) The name of the maker of a main motion should be entered in the minutes, but the name of the seconder should not be entered unless ordered by the assembly. 2) a) When a count has been ordered, the number of votes on each side is entered, unless the vote was on a motion that would not otherwise be entered in the minutes. b) When the voting is by ballot, the full tellers' report (45:37–40) is entered. c) When the voting is by roll call, the names of those voting on each side and those answering "present," as well as the total number in each category, are entered. If members who are present fail to respond on a roll-call vote, enough of their names must be recorded as present to reflect that a quorum was present at the time of the vote. If the chair voted, no special mention of this fact is made in the minutes. 3) The proceedings of a committee of the whole, or a quasi committee of the whole, are not entered in the minutes, but the fact that the assembly went into committee of the whole (or into quasi committee) and the committee report is recorded (see 52). 4) When a question is considered informally, the same information is recorded as under the regular rules, since the only informality in the proceedings is in the debate. 5) When a committee report is of great importance or should be recorded to show the legislative history of a measure, the assembly can order it "to be entered in the minutes," in which case the secretary copies it in full in, or attaches a copy of it to, the minutes. 6) The name and subject of a guest speaker can be given, but no effort should be made to summarize his remarks.*

48:6 *The use by the secretary of a recording device can be of great benefit in preparing the minutes, but a transcription from it should never be used as the minutes themselves.*

- 48:7 The Signature. Minutes should be signed by the secretary and can also be signed, if the assembly wishes, by the president. The words Respectfully submitted—although occasionally used—represent an older practice that is not essential in signing the minutes.

[Emphasis added]